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AUTHOR Harris, Judy; Jacobson, Edy

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ABSTRACT

This lesson asks 12th grade students to imagine that they are special assistants to the Undersecretary of Commerce for a foreign country who must answer a letter from a U.S. company planning to move its manufacturing operations overseas. The lesson also asks them to design a business brochure that will convince the company to come to their country. How the task will be accomplished is detailed in the lesson in a three step procedure that provides information to help the students write the letter and fashion the brochure. The teacher notes section describes the grade level and unit, California state social studies content standards, historical and social science analysis skills, lesson purpose, length of lesson, special materials needed, special instructions, and evaluation methods. Contains a list of 24 online and library resources. (BT)

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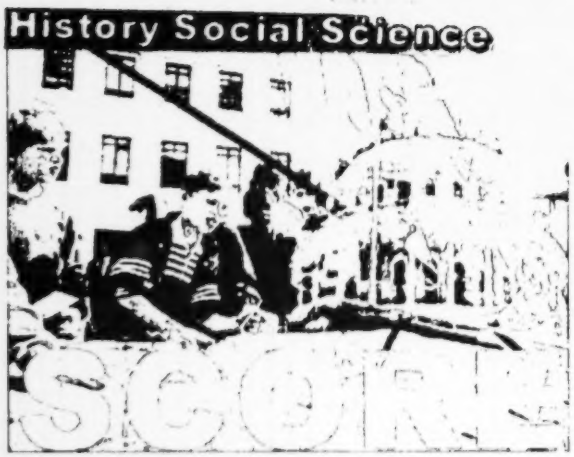

Schools of California Online Resources for Education (SCORE): Connecting California's Classrooms to the World

Fixitup Faucet Company's Overseas Move

12th Grade Lesson by Judy Harris & Edy Jacobson

SCORE
San Berardino County Superintendent of Schools
601 North E. Street
San Bernardino, CA 92410-3093

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Fixitup Faucet Company's Overseas Move

Teacher Notes

As Special Assistant to the Undersecretary of Commerce for your country, you have received this piece of correspondence from the Fixitup Faucet Company in the morning mail.

Fixitup Faucet Company, Inc.
Anystreet, Industrial City
USA

October 1, 1997

Secretary of Commerce
(Fill in the name of any country)

Dear Sir:

The Fixitup Faucet Company has a long and successful history in the United States for being the best faucet company around. But recent changes in environmental laws and labor relations have led our company to believe that we need to think about moving our factory overseas to a country that would allow us to maximize our profits. Your country has been suggested as a likely location for our new factory. We would like to invite you to submit a proposal to us detailing why we would benefit from moving our facility to your nation. On our part, we are willing to pay twice your country's average per capita wage to native employees who work at our new facility.

Also, as many as 60 of our top managers from the U.S. are willing to move to your country with their families for as long as two years in order to train your native workers to our standards. Naturally we are hoping that you will be able to accommodate the needs and wants of our U.S. managers and their families for those two years. We are also hoping that you can tell us what comparative advantages your country may have that makes it the ideal spot for our manufacturing plant.

We look forward to a response from you as soon as possible.

Sincerely,

Robert Preston
CEO Fixitup Faucets, Inc.

Task

You are the Secretary of Commerce. You have just received this letter from the Fixitup Faucet Company. You put someone in charge of making a brochure that will convince the faucet company to come to your country and establish its plant with you. Remember, this is a business brochure, not a travel brochure.

Step 1

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Start planning your business strategy. You will need to devise a brief survey to find out what Americans value most. On what products would they spend money if they came to your country? This list should include favorite foods, restaurants, means of travel, entertainment facilities and any luxuries they feel they must have. This is your needs and wants list.

Ask ten Americans of varying ages to respond to your survey. When you have your results, keep this survey handy to see if your country has the ability to respond to American needs and wants. Anything your country cannot provide must be made public to the manufacturer so he can include this in his decision about relocation.

Step 2

You now will need to become familiar with some of the vocabulary you will need to include in your brochure. Since these economic terms need be used at least once in your brochure and you are unsure that your office staff has the needed level of American style English to handle these abstract ideas correctly, write out the following list and put the definition next to each word.

1. buying power
2. currency exchange
3. per capita income
4. factors of production
5. global
6. productivity
7. labor
8. wages
9. free trade agreements
10. tariff
11. absolute advantage
12. comparative advantage
13. imports
14. exports

Step 3

A six to eight page brochure approximately 8 inches wide and eleven inches long is all you need. You should also include a map of your country with major cities. You may draw or download pictures of your country. Remember that your brochure will be the determining factor in whether you get the plant or not.

In order to prepare a quality business brochure you need answers for as many of these questions as you can.

<u>Demographics</u>
1. How many members make up the average family in your country?

Trade

2. Which factor(s) of production does your country have an abundance of and is there anything in your country that you have an absolute advantage in producing? A comparative advantage?

3. Does your country export or import more from the United States? What is your largest export and what products do you need to import the most?

Standard of living

4. What is the average per capita income of your assigned country?
Multiply that number by four and convert it into American dollars.

- Is that more or less than the faucet company said they would pay their American workers? The American Managers earn $40,000 per year.
- How much more or less in American dollars?

5. What is your form of currency and is it higher or lower than the American dollar? Will people coming from the states have a better or worse buying power in your country?

6. How does the standard of living of the people in your country compare to the people who are coming from the States?
Use your survey to see if you can fulfill their list of needs and wants.

- Is there anything on your survey that you cannot fulfill?
- Can you substitute anything else? (For example, when mad cow disease was reported in England, McDonald's started selling burgers made of chicken and turkey.)

Health

7. What is the average life expectancy of men and women in your country?

- Are these figures higher or lower than in the United States?
- What is the per person ratio of doctors and hospitals in your country? Are there sufficient hospitals and doctors in your country to meet the needs of these American immigrants?
- Will the Americans coming to your country need to get shots to prevent any particularly rampant diseases? Will you expect them to make sure they do not bring any diseases into your country from America? Do you allow people into your country who have had tuberculosis, malaria, AIDS, cancer, sickle cell anemia, etc.?

Crime/safety

8. Will Americans be safe in your country?

- Are you presently going through any wars, rebellions, state of lawlessness, etc.?
- Are you worried about Americans bringing guns from the United States where it is lawful to own handguns?
- Are there restrictions on your countrymen that you would expect the Americans to follow such as religious and civil codes? (i.e. clothing and actions that are appropriate in the United States but not in your country.)

If there are any issues you feel were not addressed by the preceding questions, please address them in your brochure. Keep your answers short and to the topic. Be optimistic, you are trying to sell your country to new investors, but do not lie. If you do, you stand to lose future investors.

Resources

Here are some good Websites for your research.

CPI Calculation Machine
http://woodrow.mpls.frb.fed.us/economy/calc/cpihome.html

Currency Comparison Page
http://www.wimmera.net.au/CurrComp/CurrComp.html

Health Statistics and Economic Trends
http://www.who.ch/programmes/hst/hsp/a/country.htm

Information on All Countries of the World
http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/index.html

Lycos City Guides
http://cityguide.lycos.com/

CIA Factbook Argentina
http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/ar.html

Argentina Business
http://www.invertir.com/

CIA Factbook Australia
http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/as.html

Guide to Australia
http://www.csu.edu.au/education/australia.html

CIA Factbook China
http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/ch.html

Chinese Business World
http://www.cbw.com/

CIA Factbook Ethiopia
http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/et.html

CIA Factbook Italy
http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/it.html

CIA Factbook Mexico
http://www.odci.gov/cia/publications/factbook/mx.html

Country at a Glance
http://www.un.org/Pubs/CyberSchoolBus/infonation/e_glance.htm

Other business references books available from the public library:

Ethiopia. Country Presentation by the Government of the Peoples Democratic Republic of Ethiopia. The United Nations 1990

Treacherous Journey: My Escape From Ethiopia. Avraham, Shmuel 1986

Ethiopia, the Roof of Africa. Kurtz, Jane 1991

El corto del niedo de devaluasion de 1994. Schettion, Macario 1995

The Italian Economy. Templeman, Donald C. 1991

Statistical Yearbook for Asia and the Pacific. United Nations 1994

The Secret Country, the Hidden Australia. Pilger, John 1991

Changing Comparative Advantages in China. Anderson, Kym 1990

Use the newspaper (current events) for any political or economic goings on in your particular country.

Conclusion

Follow-up letter just received by fax:

Fixitup Faucet Company, Inc.
Anystreet, Industrial City
USA

Dear Department of Commerce Representatives:

The owners of the Fixitup Faucet Company will pay your airfare to come to the U.S. for our next Board Meeting. We are asking the representatives from all the competing nations to give a presentation on the benefits of relocating to their countries. Please bring your brochure. Our Board will make its decision based on your representation of the work ethic, charm and likability of your countrymen and your statistical information. You are encouraged to prepare a large poster or two advertising your country to hang up in the boardroom to visually remind the board members of your presentation while they deliberate at the close of the public session.

Sincerely,

Robert Preston
CEO Fixitup Faucets, Inc.

The Board of Directors of Fixitup Faucets should now discuss the merits of each country's proposal and vote on the best option. In an action like this it is best to have an open vote rather than a secret one. If you feel your country is not being given enough credit, be sure to voice your opinions before the vote, not after. The very best of luck to you.

Evaluation

Your presentation will be evaluated on the following criteria

- Accuracy and adequacy of content information
- Content and visual appeal of the brochure and posters
- Organization of the research process and of the oral presentation itself
- Efficiency of each person's research process

Student Reflection

You have done a great deal of work for your country. Now step back and reflect on that work.

- How would you feel about living and working in the country you have represented?
- What are the advantages of living in this country? What are the disadvantages?

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- What did you learn about this country you represented that you did not know before the project? Was this a surprise for you? Why or why not?

Teacher Notes

Grade Level and Unit:

- Grade 12 Economics, Unit: Supply, Demand and Pricing; International Trade

H/SS Content Standards:

12.2 Students analyze the elements of the United States market economy in a global setting, in terms of:

7.the role of domestic and international competition in a market economy in terms of goods and services produced, and the quality, quantity, and price of those products

8.the role of profit as the incentive to the entrepreneurs in a market economy

10. the economic principles that guide the location of agricultural production and industry and the spatial distribution of transportation and retailing facilities

12.6 Students analyze issues of international trade, and explain how the U.S. economy affects, and is affected by, economic forces beyond its borders, in terms of:

1. the gains in consumption and production efficiency from trade with emphasis on the main products and changing geographic patterns of twentieth century trade among countries in the Western hemisphere

3. the changing role of international political borders and territorial sovereignty in a global economy

Historical and Social Science Analysis Skills Grades 9-12

Chronological & Spatial Thinking

2. Students analyze how change happens at different rates at different times; that some aspects can change while others remain the same; that change is complicated and affects not only technology and politics, but also value and beliefs.

3. Students use a variety of maps and documents to interpret human movement, including major patterns of domestic and international migration; changing environmental prefrences and settelment patterns; the frictions that develope between population groups; and the diffusion of ideas, technological innovations, and goods.

4. Students relate current events to the physical and human characteristics of places and regions.

Historical Reshearch, Evidence and Point of View

4. Students understand the meaning, implication, and impact of historical events while recognizing that events could have taken other directions.

Lesson Purpose
The purpose of this lesson is to enable students to gain insight into the economics of other nations and the interdependence on a global market.

Length of Lesson
5 to 7 class hours when all research is done in class, less if some research is done outside of class time.

Special Materials
You may need to provide some materials to the students. To complete this lesson, students will need plain white paper, notepads, markers, colored pencils, poster board and pens.

Special Instructions
If you have students work in groups you might want to invite another class to represent the manufacturing plant and its workers.

Evaluation
Students can be evaluated in a number of ways. Include

1. Their ability to work as a team. (if you allow them to work cooperatively)
2. The brochure produced by each member or team.
3. The presentation of each member or team for their country.
4. The posters or any additional work they do.

Adaptation to Special Needs
This lesson has been formulated based on the cooperative learning concept. Students can, however, work on this project individually as long as their findings are presented orally to the whole group. Likewise, students who have difficulty giving oral presentations might simply submit their brochures or posters. A student who has difficulty writing but does the drawings or participates in the group may be given the same grade as the rest of the group. Groups may do their research in their home language. The countries can be changed and the concept can also be changed to having manufacturing plants from various countries relocating to the United States. This would be especially helpful in ESL classes.

Written by
Judy Harris - San Fernando High School
Edy Jacobson - Garfield High School
Los Angeles Unified School District
Los Angeles, California

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